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ABSTRACT

Guidelines are presented for establishing, enhancing, and evaluating adult volunteer programs in school library resource centers, especially those in Vancouver, Canada. It is noted that in 1982 over 200 adults volunteered their time to work on a regular basis with teacher-librarians in Vancouver. Sections include: (1) a rationale for establishing adult volunteer programs; (2) a list of common program objectives; (3) a general operational model for a volunteer program, adapted from the "General Handbook on Volunteers in Schools" by Ronald Cussons; (4) a discussion of sources of adult volunteers, recruitment techniques, and selection methods; (5) information on orientation and training, with a check list of sample tasks for volunteers; (6) a description of motivational techniques for keeping volunteers happy; (7) guidelines for program administration, communication with volunteers, and showing volunteers how much they are appreciated; (8) information on developing a handbook for volunteer use; (9) a discussion of program evaluation; and (10) a series of suggestions for dealing with various problems and myths related to adult volunteer programs. A nine-item bibliography is also provided. (ESR)

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ADULT VOLUNTEERS

A Handbook for Teacher-Librarians in the Vancouver School Board

*** to provide assistance to teacher-librarians who are establishing adult volunteer programs.**

*** to suggest ideas for teacher-librarians who wish to enlarge or enhance their volunteer programs.**

"a volunteer is a supplement, not a substitute"

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VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD
Vancouver, British Columbia
1982

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RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAM

Although involving community resources in the school and its resource centre is generally acknowledged as a valuable component of education today, the use of adult volunteers is not always a corollary step. Teachers, including teacher-librarians, have occasionally looked on adult volunteers as an unpopular alternative to the provision of paid personnel. However, research regarding volunteers in the schools supports the premise that not only do such volunteers provide additional human resources for improving instruction, they also provide a basis for better understanding and support for the work of the school.

Henry Hedges, in his do toral dissertation Volunteer Parental Assistance in Elementary Schools identified and studied the use of parent volunteers in schools. Dr. Hedges developed a taxonomy of twenty-one functions performed by teachers and had them ranked by teachers into three levels. The seven most important functions identified by teachers were called 'Level One' functions. The other fourteen were equally divided into 'Level Two' and 'Level Three' functions. Using observational techniques, Hedges established percentages of time spent by teachers in these functions as they worked alone and as they worked with volunteers. The conclusions of the study showed that teachers working alone spent only 19% of their time in 'Level One' functions. When the same teachers with volunteer assistance were observed, it was found that the teachers spent 40% of their time performing 'Level One' functions, thereby more than doubling their time in the upper level tasks. This study presents the possibility that teachers can perform their most important teaching functions for a larger percentage of time when they have the assistance of volunteers.

Others have observed that volunteers from a school's neighbourhood can be an invaluable link between the teacher and the child. -- The child sees a member of the community in an important position in the school and the school gains an ambassador and interpreter to the community.

At the present time over two hundred adults volunteer their time to work on a regular basis in school library resource centres in Vancouver. More than one hundred and fifty volunteers work in elementary schools and annexes and more than eighty work in secondary schools. Adult volunteers are essential to the operation of an effective library resource centre.

School resource centres are busier every year. Teacher-librarians do more work in planning programs with classroom teachers to encourage more and better use of materials. This increased use means an increased reliance on volunteers to support the work of the teacher-librarian. In addition to adults, more than two thousand students also assist with basic library operations and routines.

Some of the duties of volunteers in school resource centres include processing new books, circulating materials, filing cards, shelving books, keeping shelves in order, typing, mending books, clipping articles, sending overdue notices, decorating the resource centre, changing newspapers and magazines, reading to children and listening to children read. These tasks vary with the school - in some resource centres volunteers even feed the fish, water the plants and clean the gerbils!

Our library resource centres are dynamic activity areas at the heart of the school. They need the support of the community to help to serve the needs of children and young people and to interpret and support the role of the teacher-librarian and resource centre to others in the community. There should be no one more welcome in a school resource centre than an adult volunteer!

OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROGRAM

In developing an adult volunteer program for the school resource centre, staffs need to define objectives as a basis for the program. Each objective should address specific needs of the school, resource centre and community.

Common objectives for volunteer programs include:

* to provide the adult volunteer with a meaningful way to spend leisure time, including the satisfaction of community service

* to stimulate an informed community to support public education

* to develop ambassadors for the school

* to supplement the school's resources with the special knowledge and talents of adult volunteers

* to learn from the community

* to give teachers more time for skilled tasks such as diagnosis, planning, motivation, instruction, and evaluation, in order to give pupils a program more suited to their individual needs

* to improve adult-pupil ratio, giving pupils more contact with a variety of adults

* to affirm the uniqueness of each child, by listening, talking and being available as an interested part/

* to give more individual attention to children, especially those with learning difficulties

* to acquaint the adult volunteer with the expectations of the school for the child, with the role of the teacher and the teacher-librarian, and with the organization and program of the school

* to stimulate parental interest in their child's education and to develop positive attitudes toward it

* to assist parents to understand better their own child and school

The rationale for an adult volunteer program should be clearly defined prior to moving to the recruitment and selection phase.

OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

This general model is adapted from the General Handbook on Volunteers in Schools prepared by Ronald Cussons for the Halton County (Ontario) Board of Education. It lends itself to further adaptation by individual teacher-librarians and principals.

1. Commitment to use adult volunteers

2. Determination of objectives for volunteer program

3. Background reading of selected materials (start with bibliography included here)

4. Decision on specific initial tasks for volunteers

5. Identification of appropriate sources of volunteers
   - parents of students in school
   - other adults from community, including senior citizens
   - students from universities, community colleges

6. Initial recruitment of volunteers
   - letter from principal or consultative committee
   - personal contact - open houses
   - district and local media
   - assistance of Assistant Superintendent - Area and/or appropriate district staff

7. General information meeting with prospective volunteers (in resource centre)
   - introduction of administration, teacher-librarian, others
   - tour of school
   - responsibilities
   - commitment
   - confidentiality
   - communication
   - selection process

8. Commitment of volunteers
   - regular half-days or other periods
   - types of tasks

9. Initial observation and volunteer service period
   - to orient adult volunteer
   - to develop confidence and rapport
   - to explain specific procedures
   - written guidelines provided
   - specific tasks performed by volunteer

10. Modification of tasks performed by volunteer
    - talents
    - interests
    - suitability
    - resource centre requirements
    - developing capabilities

11. In-service training in areas of service
    - by teacher-librarian
    - by district staff in areas
    - opportunity for volunteers to assist at programs at the Teacher Centre

12. Feedback and Evaluation
    - oral and written; involving principal, teachers, volunteers
    - before and/or after session
    - provided on a regular basis, mostly informal
    - end of school year questionnaire

13. Thank You!
    - social gathering at least once a year for <u>all</u> staff to show appreciation to volunteers

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION: SOURCES AND TECHNIQUES

Sources

Adult volunteers for the resource centre may be recruited from these sources:

- parents with or without children in the school
- other adults in the community - individuals; senior citizens; civic, fraternal, charitable or other special interest groups or associations
- students from universities and community colleges

Recruitment Techniques

Recruitment of parents may be through the school newsletter or a special letter sent home with all students in September, or whenever a need is identified. In some schools this special letter may originate with the School Consultative Committee.

Other methods of recruitment include:

- resource centre open house on 'Meet the Teacher Night', with volunteer information table, staffed by volunteer parent; interested parents leave their name for follow-up contact
- personal contact by principal, teacher-librarian or volunteer already working with individuals or neighbourhood groups such as senior citizen clubs
- poster and fact sheet (rip-off type) or flyers in community centre, branch public library, neighbourhood churches
- cooperative effort early in year, with kindergarten teacher, such as story-telling program with coffee for parents
- a letter of invitation to parents of kindergarten children at time of spring registration for following fall

In cases where difficulty is experienced by the school in recruiting adult volunteers, the Area Assistant Superintendent may be able to redirect volunteers from other schools within the area. Assistance may also be available through the Vancouver Volunteer Centre.

Recruitment messages should be specific, describing the kinds of jobs to be done, how much time, when and where the volunteers will be needed. Include an invitation to an orientation meeting and the method of training to be provided. Mentioning training may help to allay the fears of those who are not sure that they would qualify.

Selection

Selection of adult volunteers may seem an unlikely luxury to teacher-librarians whose experience may have been limited to classroom mothers. However, if recruitment messages accurately describe the needs and tasks, a certain amount of self-screening will take place.

A clear period of pre-service or on-the-job training will also provide time for additional selection. Organizations with a long history of volunteer service recognize that some attrition is normal during this period. This has led many into a certain amount of over-recruitment.

Such organizations often make an effort to find other places for volunteers who do not find the job for which they first volunteered congenial, realizing that they still want to give service. Teacher-librarians may be able to suggest other areas of the school program where volunteers are needed when faced with a similar situation.

When recruitment of adults other than parents is considered, it may be necessary to apply different criteria for these volunteers. An informal interview may determine suitability.

One method of facilitating this ongoing process of selection is to appoint a volunteer chairperson who handles all absences and replacement by maintaining an "on-call pool". If the absence of a volunteer, due to family emergency or illness, will pose a difficulty to the program, this individual's role will be especially helpful where access to telephones are a problem. Another approach is to provide each volunteer with the names and telephone numbers of all volunteers and when they might be able to substitute -- volunteers can then try to find their own replacements.

The volunteer chairperson might also represent the resource centre on the School Consultative Committee Executive, if organization allows for this.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

An effective volunteer program inevitably includes a period of training which in a larger sense can be called never-ending. An introduction to the school and its policies is the first step in preparing adults for their role as volunteers in the school.

ORIENTATION: A COMPASS TO SET THE DIRECTION OF THE PROGRAM

In the first meeting of volunteers they should be provided with a clear understanding of their role within the school and resource centre. This basic information should be covered in this meeting:

- introduction of principal, vice-principal, teacher-librarian, staff assistants, student monitors (perhaps represented by two students)
- school plant, either a tour or map, covering entrances, exits, traffic patterns, fire-drill routes, washroom locations (children and adults), supply rooms, bookrooms, workrooms, and facilities for eating, parking, and smoking
- use of school telephone
- discussion of confidentiality and ethics
- discussion of commitment, absences, punctuality
- guidelines regarding discipline, visitors, use of school equipment, keys, custodial services

At this meeting, an opportunity to sign up for specific periods of assistance in the resource centre is given. Although this is generally for one morning or one afternoon per week, the teacher-librarian might also welcome short-term or long-term help for specific jobs such as inventories or processing large book orders. An "on-call pool" may be set up now. Those who sign up for regular or other service are given any written training material now, if it is to be used.

The items below are to serve as a guide to information and procedures that should be presented to all school volunteers in Vancouver:

A. Becoming Acquainted

1. Introduction to Administration, Staff, and Pupils
2. Type of School Community
3. Tour of School Plant (Refer to School Map)
   - Traffic Patterns, Entrances, Exits
   - Fire Drill Routes and Locations
   - Lavatory Locations (Children and Adults)
   - Supply Rooms
   - Bookrooms
   - Workrooms
   - Eating Facilities
   - Parking Facilities
   - Smoking Facilities
4. Classroom Observations

B. Personal Responsibilities

1. Absences (Procedures to follow)
2. Checking In and Out
3. Reading Posted Bulletins
4. Use of School Equipment

C. School Policies

1. Regular and Minimum Day Schedules (Staff, Children)
2. Discipline
3. Releasing children to adults
4. Visitors
5. Children leaving classroom
6. Teacher leaving classroom
7. Use of school phone
8. Books sent home
9. Homework
10. Notes, letters sent home
11. School keys
12. Emergency calls during school hours
13. Use of custodial services
14. Lost and Found
15. Meetings

SPECIFIC TRAINING

Although some express fears that a formal training program would "pose a threat" or put off the very people who are most needed, all agree that volunteers should have adequate background and preparation to make a real contribution. In this sense, training moves through a natural progression, with orientation as the first step. Specific training, whether pre-service or on-the-job, simple or highly structured, is another aspect. The opportunity for growth and advancement is a third, and evaluation of training is a fourth.

Some informal methods of training which teacher-librarians use with small groups or individual volunteers include training by individual adult volunteers, training by student volunteers, and arranging for each adult volunteer to be present as an observer/assistant when appropriate.

On-the-job training given by the teacher-librarian and/or staff assistant is the method used most frequently, simply because it allows everyone to concentrate on the jobs that need doing when they arise. As a corps of established volunteers is built, some on-the-job training may be taken over by these volunteers, with professional supervision. Teams of one new and one returning volunteer also may be assigned, if this suits the demands of the job.

Library Services has also developed programs for training adult volunteers and offers these on an area basis with a minimum enrolment of 15.

Recognize that some volunteers will prefer one specific task and will return to it once trained throughout their period of service. Others, probably a majority, will appreciate receiving varied training and an opportunity to try their skills on new tasks throughout the year.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

For most volunteers, serving as a school volunteer will be an opportunity for growth and advancement on a personal level. Although advancement is frequently linked with motivation, gaining simple skills, increased responsibility and experience in dealing with adults and children often provide volunteers with confidence to take on new jobs, either as a volunteer or in the job market. The step from draining staff time to supporting and enhancing the role of the teacher-librarian might be called the hallmark of a successful volunteer program, although a more common experience is that the best volunteers move on to full or part-time employment outside the schools. Those volunteers who are moving outward could be especially helpful in evaluation and feedback, especially of the training program.

To provide some means of advancement, teacher-librarians should attempt to encourage ideas from the volunteers for improving the program and follow through whenever possible; encourage attendance at meetings, workshops and on appropriate topics; make available pertinent books and periodicals

SAMPLE TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS (not an exhaustive list)

Clerical/Technical

- circulation desk duties
- shelving
- carding
- sorting and filing day's cards
- typing
- general housekeeping
- shelf reading
- processing new books, magazines
- photocopying and duplicating
- book mending
- pulling selected resource materials for teachers
- preliminary preparation of project materials
- organizing master picture file
- organizing filmstrips
- clipping, filing, locating information
- looking after overdues and reserves
- typing bibliographies
- preliminary updating of bibliographies
- typing, binding and filing exceptional works written by students
- decorating resource centre, bulletin boards, displays
- taping
- using laminating, dry mounting machines
- sorting and distributing mail

- reviewing materials for parental reaction
- assisting with inventory
- labeling materials
- listings of losses
- prepare and update list of resource persons and materials from the community
- caring for plants
- writing, filing or checking consideration cards
- filing catalogue cards - author, title and subject
- changing newspapers, periodicals
- annotations for materials
- reinforcing materials (paperbacks, periodicals)

Work with Students

- assist small groups in library procedures
- assist teacher with supervision of large groups
- supervise work groups
- read stories to children
- listen to children read
- show filmstrips, transparencies
- help younger children by recording stories and information
- supervise instructional games
- talk to group on special interest subject
- run audio-visual testing program

Audio-Visual Assistance

- order and return films and AV supplies
- rewind films and tapes
- set up and retrieve AV equipment
- operate projectors
- assist teachers and pupils in use of equipment
- reproduce sound tapes
- prepare overhead transparencies
- prepare preliminary introductions as background for viewing

MOTIVATION: KEEPING VOLUNTEERS HAPPY

What motivates people to volunteer service? How can initial enthusiasm or motivation be maintained in adult volunteers?

The only qualification a volunteer needs is a commitment to wanting to help children. Everyone has a reason for volunteering, but in general, people need to feel good about themselves and volunteering is one way to do that.

The reasons why volunteers offer their services to schools and resource centres are many, and it behooves the teacher-librarian to know them and to make personnel decisions regarding their deployment. Some volunteer simply to get out of the house for a few hours, to talk to adults, to stimulate their minds, to do something useful. Or they want, surreptitiously, to share the school experiences from which, as their children grow up, they find themselves increasingly debarred. Teacher-librarians are well-trained to define needs.

They have been prepared by management experience and tradition to delegate tasks to untrained student helpers and to organize large jobs into short simple segments. To delegate to volunteers, regardless of their interests and abilities, only the simplest and most repetitive of library routines because that is what student monitors did successfully is short-sighted and self-defeating.

Recognizing the individual motivation of a volunteer can help the teacher-librarian to make the best use of the assistance available, and to show appreciation on a continuing basis.

Schools with an organized volunteer program usually find a way to recognize all volunteers with a tea, coffee party, luncheon, special pin, or certificate, for hours of service. There is no substitute, however, for personal contact, and an expression of thanks for a job that is worthwhile, no matter how routine it may seem.

In recent years behavioral scientists have influenced the thinking of management toward motivating people and keeping them enthusiastic. The traditional approach of management was based on the concept that people do not want to work, that they are forced to do so, and that their activities must be directed by persuasion, reward, punishment and control. This was Douglas McGregor's Theory X in The Human Side of Enterprise.

McGregor, following the teachings of Abraham Maslow and other psychologists, believes these precepts are wrong, that people will work because they want to work, and they will work better if they have a say in how they will meet their objectives. This he developed into 'Theory Y', now usually called "management-by-objectives":

1. Management is responsible for organizing the elements of productive enterprise - money, materials, people, equipment - in the interest of meeting their goals.

2. People are not by nature passive or resistant to organizational needs. They have become so as a result of experience in organizations which expected such behaviour.

3. The motivation, the potential for development, the capacity for assuming responsibility, the readiness to direct behaviour toward organizational goals are all present in people. Management does not put them there. It is the responsibility of management to make it possible for people to recognize and develop these human characteristics for themselves.

4. The essential task of management is to arrange organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing their own efforts toward organizational objectives.

How can this be applied to a volunteer program? Management-by-objectives theory has been widely accepted in education, with the importance of clearly defined objectives stressed at provincial, district and school levels. It will be the teacher-librarian's task to communicate to volunteers the objectives of the resource centre, how they contribute to larger goals, and the part volunteers play in working toward these objectives in tasks that may appear mundane and repetitive at times.

Factors To Consider To Keep Your Adult Volunteers

* volunteers should feel that their contribution is important
* continued participation from volunteers depends upon intangible rewards, particularly the teacher-librarian's show of gratitude for work done
* volunteers should see the relationship between what they do to the total effort
* the first tasks for a volunteer should be simple enough to ensure success
* volunteers should have opportunities to grow and learn
* volunteers should be encouraged to contribute to decision-making in connection with their tasks
* volunteers work best in a friendly warm atmosphere, where their efforts are obviously needed and appreciated
* volunteers should not be taken for granted
* volunteers should be informed about developments in and about the school
* care enough about your school volunteers to learn their strengths and use them

ADMINISTRATION

All tasks are meant to be carried out under the supervision of the teacher-librarian or staff assistant, though obviously some are mastered with a minimum of instruction and volunteers should soon feel a useful part of the resource centre team.

Encourage volunteers to ask questions, to offer special skills (as poster-maker, storyteller, etc.) and to say no to an assignment they feel they can't -- or shouldn't -- handle.

These suggestions are applicable to most schools but modification to suit individual needs is desirable.

Organization and Coordination

- use single coordinator - could be the principal, vice-principal, teacher or volunteer - when volunteers are to assist in several areas of the school or
- use group as coordinator, two or three members of above list or
- have teacher-librarian responsible for resource centre volunteers
- in any organization the teacher-librarian must remain the organizer, director and evaluator of the experience
- have adult volunteer responsible for phoning and arranging for substitute volunteers when necessary
- coordinator can reassign volunteers, discuss problems and situations, and even terminate a volunteer's services when necessary
- university/college/secondary school student volunteer programs must be coordinated through the joint effort of personnel from both schools involved
- joint meeting of staff and volunteers is recommended for organizing program and making all necessary arrangements
- do follow-up on the volunteer who drops out in order to find out why and thereby avoid similar problems
- staff and volunteers visit other schools utilizing volunteers, in order to observe ideas for possible implementation

Communication

- provide written guidelines or handbook for each volunteer
- familiarize volunteers with school policy on fire, accident, insurance, ethics and discipline
- provide a written list of tasks, or volunteer's logbook, which volunteers can check or initial on completion
- instead of list or log, leave work to be done in clearly marked box or cupboard (book repair, information file, magazines, etc.)
- have a "job jar" with laminated cards for those who finish assigned tasks
- instructions should be clearly written, laminated and attached to each "work station" such as the circulation desk, processing area, etc.
- keep supplies handy, in well marked location
- allow time for some socializing, it's one of the rewards many volunteers seek, and a valuable time for feedback

- be sure volunteer's skills don't become a resented routine (your only typist may hate typing)
- training and workshops should be held at school, as few volunteers will be able or willing to travel outside area
- use telephone to recruit volunteers from previous year and obtain evaluation and information
- formally introduce volunteers to the staff so that all teachers know the names and faces of all volunteers
- have volunteers wear name-tags or volunteer badges
- keep general record or chart in office or work area for all volunteers, including times and areas of commitment
- give constructive guidance to volunteers throughout the year, and be willing to listen to their comments and suggestions
- use log-sheet or questionnaire to determine what volunteers do or would like to do
- have regular "buzz" sessions
- supply each volunteer with a fact sheet about the school which may be used to help inform the community, and answer questions that may be asked.

Appreciation and Rewards

Honest, regular praise and thanks given to volunteers for jobs well done is the most important method of ensuring satisfied and effective volunteers.

- appreciation can be given in written form using:
    - newsletters
    - newspapers
    - letters of appreciation
- appreciation can be given in oral form:
    - consultative committee meetings
    - meet the teacher night or other open house
    - sports day
- appreciation should come from all levels
    - students
    - teachers
    - school administration
    - school district
- at the end of a term or year, a tea or get-together provides a good place for appreciation -- include administration and community leaders who will offer their thanks
- a school memento such as a pin, scroll, or certificate, might be considered for those volunteers who have served regularly, or given extraordinary service
- some schools avoid honors which imply a quantitative or qualitative judgment, believing that a single sincere effort should not be overlooked when recognition is given for service.

THE HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS -- SUGGESTIONS

Volunteers will need to consult an authority from time to time as they carry out their duties. The teacher-librarian, principal and/or staff assistant will answer most of the questions which arise, but it also may be helpful to provide some written material which volunteers can use.

This may be a single fact sheet presenting basic guidelines covered in the orientation session. Each volunteer may be given a copy, and one should be kept in the volunteer's logbook or posted on a bulletin board of volunteer information.

Volunteers should be familiarized with posters, charts and other teaching material in the library resource centre which directs pupils in the use of the centre. In smaller libraries, this may be adequate written instruction, if it is used during initial training of volunteers, and remains available throughout the year.

Other teacher-librarians may prefer to have a small booklet or pamphlet for use by each volunteer.

Some topics which may be covered in either fact sheets or a handbook are outlined below. Suggestions are provided for a starting point for teacher-librarians to use in developing their own material.

Goals and Purpose of Library Resource Centre

Administering The School Resource Centre; A Handbook of Procedures provides several pieces of information which may prove useful. For example, the aim of the school library program is clearly articulated "to assist students to become informed decision-makers and life-long learners" (p. 5). A framework and strategies for achieving this goal is also included.

The concept of an open, multi-media resource and independent inquiry centre will be unfamiliar to many adults whose schooling may have been distant in time and/or philosophy.

A resource-based approach to learning is part of modern teaching methods. The school resource centre includes a collection of material, both print and non-print, which supports instruction in various areas of the curriculum, and the teacher-librarian plans with colleagues and team teaches research and study skills.

An important goal for all students is learning, using and appreciating study and research skills. The teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher work together to provide students with a variety of opportunities to use the library resource centre in working toward this goal.

Learning to use and appreciate a library resource centre will provide all students with increased opportunities for lifelong education and enjoyment.

Volunteers can help with many tasks that must be done in the resource centre which allow the teacher-librarian to concentrate on teaching pupils to make the best use of the multi-media resources available to them.

The Code of Ethics

The teacher-librarian or principal will discuss this subject at orientation, explaining that volunteers should be bound by the same code of ethics as teaching staff - to maintain confidentiality regarding each pupil, including progress, behaviour and records. A written statement may reinforce this discussion.

Punctuality and Attendance

Teacher-librarians have differing requirements in this area, depending on the needs of the school. Volunteers will want a clear statement on how important their attendance will be, what method they should follow when illness or emergency arises (contact volunteer coordinator or teacher-librarian), and procedures if they are leaving a volunteer position before the end of school year.

A Map or Floor Plan of the Library Resource Centre

An Outline of Duties

This brief, generalized summary may be preferable to the list of tasks given earlier in Section D:

Your duties may include some or all of the following:
- to assist with the circulation of materials
- to help maintain a neat and orderly resource centre
- to integrate new materials into the existing collection
- to make simple repairs to damaged materials
- to aid in setting up displays
- to assist students in the location of materials
- to assist in inventories of current materials
- to assist in the ordering of new materials

Introduction to Staff and their proper titles

Specific Details on circulation desk procedures

How to Help a Student Locate Materials

Some teacher-librarians and/or volunteers will prefer to have all questions and requests referred to the teacher-librarian, but all will need some basics on what to say (and what not to say), when students ask for help. Volunteers will need guidance in encouraging each student to apply research skills -- even if the student only wants another story by a favourite author, whose name has been forgotten.

Some ideas for this section:

The basic tool of locating material is the CARD CATALOGUE. All learning resources in the school (or library) are classified and catalogued in the resource centre, and entered in the Card Catalogue. Materials are listed under the AUTHOR, the TITLE (ignore "The", "A" and "An" if it is

the first word of the title), and what the material is about or the SUBJECT (like the Yellow Pages in the Telephone Directory). ** Samples of catalogue cards may be reproduced **

Other basic sources of information are ENCYCLOPEDIAS. Always check the index to an encyclopedia set first. If there is an index volume, it will be clearly marked with the notation "REFER TO THIS VOLUME FIRST". There are often articles on a topic in several different volumes.

DICTIONARIES AND ATLASES are located on separate stands in the library. On each stand there are clear instructions for the proper use of these resources.

PERIODICALS OR MAGAZINES - Several of the magazines received by the resource centre are indexed by subject. The teacher-librarian or other staff member will be pleased to show you how to use these tools, and how to locate the periodicals available.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A VOLUNTEER TELL A STUDENT THAT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON A GIVEN TOPIC. IF THAT APPEARS TO BE THE CASE, THE TEACHER-LIBRARIAN HAS ACCESS TO OTHER SCHOOLS AND RESOURCES.

Rules and Regulations for Students Using the Library Resource Centre

One question many volunteers will have (but they may not express) concerns discipline, and what their responsibilities are. The principal and/or teacher-librarian may prefer to discuss the school's code of conduct with volunteers during their orientation. Volunteers also need to know the school's policy on overdue and lost material, if reference or AV materials may be checked out, if there is a book limit, a reserve system, etc. Sample statements might include:

Discipline in the school and its resource centre is the responsibility of administration and professional staff. The teacher-librarian sets the tone for library discipline, and volunteers and staff members work within that framework.

It will help to remember that there are really only two basic rules for library behaviour. The first is:

> Be considerate of the needs of other library users--including the people who work here.

The second is implied in the first, but equally important:

> Be careful in handling library materials and equipment.

Volunteers should never be left alone to supervise but they should be told what procedure to follow if they are briefly left as adult supervisor and a problem arises. Clear communication with staff and students about the role of volunteers is essential in preventing problems in this area.

Selection Policy

The complete statement of Vancouver School Board policy on the selection of learning resources is available for volunteers by duplicating pages 28-31 of Administering the School Resource Centre. Procedures for dealing with questioned materials are outlined in the same handbook.

Adult volunteers who wish to learn more about books for young people may be referred to the professional selection aids provided by the district (see pages 60-61 of Administering the School Resource Centre) and other materials on books, parents and reading in the resource centre or Teachers' Professional Library. (e.g. titles by Arbuthnot, Huck, Larrick, etc.)

Library Resource Centre Terms

How to understand the teacher-librarian's special language. Common terms and brief definitions might be included. (Teacher-librarians should avoid jargon whenever possible, as much for the students as for the volunteers.)

Dewey Decimal System

A simplified version of the Dewey Decimal System may be included in the volunteer's handbook, as it related to those duties which volunteers will normally perform. A note about the exceptions such as Easy-to-read fiction and Biography may be given.

In summarizing the Dewey Decimal Classification and the arrangement of books in a library, attention should be given to a few general rules. Non-fiction books are arranged by subjects, beginning with the general and followed by the specific. These subjects are identified by a classification number or code. Within each classification number, books are arranged alphabetically by author, with the exception of individual biographies which are arranged alphabetically by the name of the subject. The classification scheme is designed much like a street address directory. Each number stands for a subject and when assigned, provides each book with its own address or location in the library.

EVALUATION

The lack of objective evaluation in volunteer programs is a continuing problem. It is hard to recruit and keep volunteers from the larger community unless there is some solid evidence that their efforts show results. More evaluation is needed of the programs themselves, of the volunteers, and of the effects on the children, say the critics.

There are difficulties here, however, for the goals of some programs may not lend themselves to measurable results. Tutorial programs that aim at a warm relationship of adult to child in a one-to-one effort to strengthen the child's self-concept before beginning to learn is a prime example.

It also may be difficult to single out volunteers as the factor that led to an improvement when several new programs and techniques are involved. A controlled experiment is not always possible.

It is equally difficult to measure whether children's learning improved after their parents expressed a positive attitude due to volunteering. Some aspects of a volunteer program will probably continue to be based on faith rather than scientific proof.

However, in the fifteen years since the Plowden Report was published, many schools have had considerable experience with volunteers and have carried out a variety of evaluations of their experiences. Evidence of a change in the attitude of students is one subjective evaluation that administrators often give as a sign of success.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, a project which brings senior citizens into the schools as specialists in the arts and crafts has had an overwhelmingly positive response and two unexpected bonuses. Teachers, principals, parents and visitors have repeatedly called attention to the unusual "cure" that a grandperson (their term) had spontaneously effected with a a hyperactive child. On the other side of the coin, social workers and nursing home and retirement home directors have reported marked improvements in the health of many senior volunteers. Both of these phenomena are now being built into project evaluation.

Agreement on the objectives of a volunteer program is not only the first step in organization, it is also necessary before adequate evaluation can take place. The degree of achievement of basic goals such as these can be measured:

- relieving the teacher of non-professional chores
- providing enrichment for teacher and student
- stimulating support of public education

The National (U.S.) School Volunteer Program has set forth useful guidelines for evaluation. These begin with three questions:

1. What are the defined goals of the program?
2. What evidence is there of the achievement of these goals?
3. How can this service be improved?

Then NSVP asks: "On what can evaluation of the program be based?" and gives this answer:

A. Ongoing evaluation

1. Informal comments by members of the school staff, principal and volunteers
2. Unsolicited oral or written comments by staff, principal and volunteers

3. Conferences between volunteers and school staff
4. Volunteers' daily log
5. Observation
6. Monthly reports by unit chairperson or coordinator

B. Evaluation at the end of the school year

1. Teacher evaluation questionnaire
2. Principal evaluation questionnaire
3. Unit chairperson and/or coordinator annual evaluation form
4. Volunteers' evaluation questionnaire

C. Statistical study of achievement levels of children in special help programs.

D. Statistical time study of relief of professional staff from non-professional chores

PROBLEMS AND MYTHS

In this section various myths and problems are given, with some positive thoughts and techniques in circumventing them. This material is derived from the Teachers' Handbook on Volunteers, prepared by Konald Cussons for the Halton County (Ontario) Board of Education. It has been altered to bring it into agreement with policies of the Vancouver School Board and the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

PROBLEMS

Schools that Cannot Recruit Volunteers

- hold information and orientation meetings for volunteers before asking for a commitment
- consider student as well as adult volunteers from such sources as:
    - senior elementary grades
    - local high school
    - local college and university
    - senior citizens' clubs, seniors housing projects
    - adults in school community without children
    - adults from other communities
- start program small and let it expand by word of mouth
- use media to solicit volunteers -- newsletters, flyers, local newspaper, radio, TV where feasible

Inadequate Involvement of Volunteers in Grades 8-12

- see above for many ideas
- ask elementary school volunteers to move up to secondary level
- ask junior students if their parents would be interested
- recruit students in senior grades, and in related programs such as business education and community service

Adequate Use of Volunteers

- consider both the school's and the volunteer's needs
- try to provide more challenging tasks as the volunteer shows ability
- train volunteers for specific tasks either individually or in groups
- provide opportunity for feedback and discussion on a regular basis
- ask volunteers what tasks they would like to perform
- let volunteers (students or adults) know if they are not needed on a specific day so their time is not wasted

Involvement of Adult Volunteers Other Than Parents

- canvass community through flyers, personal contact and current volunteers
- consider senior citizens
- contact the Vancouver Volunteer Centre
- make sure they understand two points:
    a) they are able to play a role
    b) there are tasks which they can perform
- be prepared to build up this area slowly

Attendance and Commitment of Volunteers

- if this problem is effectively handled during volunteer orientation, it should not occur - stress reliance on the volunteer and need for volunteer to call when unable to come
- make sure that volunteers realize that they can opt out if unable to assist regularly
- make it clear that the teacher-librarian has the same option
- consider a standard trial period (2-4 weeks) at the end of which both teacher and volunteer must request continuance from principal or volunteer co-ordinator

In-Service Training

- this problem is handled on pages 7-11 of this handbook
- training must be two-fold, both for volunteers and teachers

Communication and Feedback to Volunteers

- informality and regularity are the keys in this area
- both the tasks performed, and the value of the assistance, should be topics for discussion
- some methods appropriate are:
    - individual discussion for 5 minutes after each session
    - keeping of a notebook for observations
    - regular weekly or monthly meetings
    - buzz sessions with all volunteers

Definition of Volunteer Tasks

- any tasks which a volunteer is asked to do must be clearly stated and within the capability of the volunteer
- volunteers often state they don't know what is expected, or aren't trained to perform certain tasks -- this can result in loss of a volunteer or of her respect and enthusiasm
- add one of two new tasks per week but be sure to explain fully your expectations before assigning tasks
- volunteers often feel they know how to do a task when really they don't - review jobs frequently

Co-ordination of Volunteer Services

- within a school, one person or a committee might have the responsibility for the volunteer program if confusion is a problem
- the one person could be a teacher, the vice-principal, or a volunteer with the time and interest to commit
- a committee might be composed of the principal or vice-principal, a teacher, and a volunteer
- when a committee handles the administration of the volunteer program, both the volunteers and teachers have a person to turn to for advice and assistance

Transportation for Volunteers

- the responsibility in this area obviously rests with the volunteers, but some techniques may be used to facilitate any problems -- car pool, teachers picking up and returning volunteers, driver volunteers

Teacher-Volunteer Relationships

- perhaps one of the most important values of volunteerism is the development of a close relationship between a teacher and volunteer
- this has implications for the openness of communication necessary, the effectiveness of the volunteer and feedback to the community
- it should be recognized that cases of incompatibility will occur between teachers and volunteers, and this can be solved by being direct and open in discussion
- an effectively administered volunteer program will provide an alternative position for a volunteer who finds it difficult to work with a certain teacher, or vice-versa
- volunteers should also realize from the outset that their assistance will be regretfully terminated if the problem of incompatibility overshadows their effectiveness
- before implementing a volunteer program, all staff should agree that volunteers will be treated courteously so that stress does not develop among staff as the program develops and expands
- agreement should also be reached on volunteer use of the staffroom

Confidentiality and Ethics of Volunteer Role

- explanation of the volunteer's responsibilities and obligations in these areas must be a major section in the pre-service orientation given to all volunteers
- volunteers must be aware that if they are to maintain the confidence placed in them that no information on specific students or problem situations be related outside the school
- it should also be stressed that once volunteers have made a commitment, it be followed through with regular punctuality and attendance (excepting personal problems or emergencies) until such time as the commitment is terminated

Discipline by Volunteers

- teachers have the legal authority and responsibility to discipline students in a judicious manner

Student Understanding of the Volunteer Role

- before a volunteer assumes responsibilities, students must be made fully aware of:
    a) the volunteer's position and responsibilities
    b) the student's responsibilities in respect to the volunteer
- an observation and orientation period before assistance begins can create a more relaxed and understanding atmosphere in which everyone can work
- students must be informed that the volunteer is acting on behalf of the teacher and is to be given the same attention and courtesy as the teacher

Parental Misunderstanding of the Volunteer Role

- before any volunteer program is begun, whether adult or student, the school community should be made aware of the objectives and scope of the program
- this can be accomplished by newsletter, meetings, and even the public media
- once a program has been introduced, parents who react negatively can be accommodated by some of the following techniques:
    - an individual discussion of the objectives
    - an opportunity to observe the program with a volunteer in action
    - removal of the volunteer from contact with the children of parents who desire this
- there are often valid criticisms of the use of volunteers by parents which should be considered and used as a basis for modifying the program where necessary and desirable
- teachers must remember that volunteers are a supportive, not a replacement resource, and avoid having a volunteer handle tasks that parents rightly feel are the teacher's direct responsibility (for example, supervising an entire class in the teacher's absence, unless brief and unavoidable, doing remedial work without teacher guidance)

Volunteers and Insurance

Merely participating in the everyday activities of life provides a degree of hazard. In the event of a mishap, the loss or injury must be borne by the individual responsible. It is only when the law finds someone else legally liable that a damage action can be successful. The Vancouver School Board as employer would also be liable if the teacher is acting within the scope of his employment. For teachers, the best protection against such liability is careful planning, the acceptance and use of proven procedures and standards, and the presence of well qualified leaders. When a student is injured while participating in school activities, either inside or outside the school premises, the student has no claim for damages against the school board or the teacher unless negligence on the part of the school board or the teacher is proven to have resulted in the injury.

Liability for injury resulting from poor supervision can be established when the following four conditions exist:

1. The standard of care which a court of law would likely use as a criterion in negligence action is that which would be exercised by a careful parent of a large family. It is the duty or obligation of a teacher to use a standard of care for the protection of others against unreasonable risk of injury.
2. Failure to conform to the above standard;

   and
3. A reasonably close connection between the conduct of the person in charge and the resulting injury;

   and
4. Actual loss or damage to the injured person.

Teachers should be aware of their legal rights and protection as a Vancouver School Board employee. The following information outlines the Vancouver School Board's insurance policy:

- under the terms of the policy, parents are considered as volunteer workers and as such the policy protects the Board and the volunteers for liability imposed by law, as a result of possible negligence by one of these volunteer workers
- if the supervisors of the group are negligent in the care and custody of the students, both the Board and the supervisor are protected.
- the Board, teachers and volunteers are protected on a "24 hour basis" during field study. The coverage is in effect so long as teachers and volunteers are acting within the scope of their employment. For example, a teacher would not be covered if a student was taken on an unauthorized venture for personal reasons during the field study. Similarly, the teacher might also not be covered if a field study was organized without getting the permission of the principal. If the Board were held liable by the Courts as a result of such unauthorized activity, it would be covered under its policy but the insurers may have the right to recover from the teacher any payment which it is obliged to make on behalf of the Board.

MYTHS

Most Volunteers are Nosey, Gossipy and/or Critical

The evidence is exactly to the contrary. A very small number of volunteers may exhibit one or more of these traits, but an effective program, open communication and clear initial guidelines will prevent most problems of this nature. Several principals have already discovered how much better it is to have such a volunteer learn first-hand about the school, rather than spread ill-founded rumours; these people often become strong advocates of the school in the community.

Many Volunteers Have to be Fired or Dismissed

Very rarely does a volunteer have to be asked not to continue providing assistance. That the number of times this happens is extremely low, reflects both the kind of commitment volunteers have, and the effective orientation they are being given by teacher-librarians. In cases where incompatibility or incompetence occur, the volunteer involved will often stop willingly and thus prevent the necessity of a confrontation.

Volunteers Give Teachers Free Time

The function of a volunteer is to provide assistance so that the teacher-librarian can modify tasks to better meet student needs. It is the opportunity for change in teacher functions that a volunteer provides, not the opportunity for time off, or otherwise lightening of the teacher's workload. In actual fact, new work is created for the teacher-librarian initially, and continues to some extent, because the teacher-librarian must plan for, supervise and communicate with the volunteer.

Volunteers Save the Board Money

In no way is money saved.

- no teachers are replaced or given heavier loads through involvement with volunteers
- no change in pupil-teacher ratio has been implemented as a result of using volunteers
- no consideration at district level is given to the financial aspects of the use of volunteers
- volunteers are an additional resource without financial reimbursement for those teachers who wish them

Use of Volunteers Will Result in Fewer Teachers and/or Staff Assistants

No thought is given to using volunteers rather than teacher-librarians or staff assistants for the following reasons:

- they are a free resource and must remain that way philosophically and practically to fulfill the needs of the volunteers
- no contract is given
- commitment cannot be enforced other than through good faith
- most volunteers work only a few hours a week and therefore cannot replace teachers or paid clerical assistance
- lack of training or certification

Turn-Over Rate for Volunteers is High

Approximately 20% of volunteers leave each year; this is a very low percentage considering the commitment volunteers must have to maintain their service over months and even years. Positively speaking, it is worthwhile to get new volunteers each year, so that the communication value of volunteerism can be broadened throughout the community. Many volunteers who leave do so to take on new responsibilities, often as a result of the confidence and competence they have gained while giving assistance in the school.

Volunteers Don't Mind Drudgery

This is true in a very few cases. In most situations volunteers expect that they will be asked to perform some clerical and housekeeping duties to free the teacher-librarian for cooperative planning and teaching. However, volunteers also have needs and most enjoy some student involvement and challenging tasks other than "joe-jobs". If a volunteer and teacher-librarian have established a rapport and open communication, selection of tasks should be a shared process, based on the needs of the resource centre and volunteer. It should be realized that as volunteers develop more competence in their roles, they should be assigned more challenging tasks, always resulting in more effective resource centre programs.

Volunteers Are Not Reliable (Punctuality, Attendance, Co-operation)

In a few instances this is probably quite true. In the great majority of cases, however, volunteers attempt very hard to meet their commitment. Teachers must always bear in mind that volunteer assistance is a free resource, and that personal illness, emergencies, or problems must at times take precedence over the school. Generally speaking, the reliability of a volunteer can be directly related to the rapport established with the teacher-librarian and the degree to which the volunteer feels assistance is both valuable and appreciated.

Volunteers Think Teachers' Jobs are Easy

It would appear the opposite is true. When volunteers work in the schools their reactions seem to be that they didn't realize the complexity and difficulty of teaching and being a teacher-librarian. The school and its teachers cannot help but gain much better community support and understanding for their goals when volunteers are being used effectively.

Only Talented, Highly Educated Students and Adults Make Good Volunteers

It is the broad spectrum in ability and interests which gives volunteer assistance programs their capability to meet many different needs. There is no reason why every person who volunteers for sincere reasons cannot be given a meaningful role to play. It depends upon the effective administration of a volunteer plan, and the willingness of the teaching staff to involve volunteers in tasks which meet everyone's needs. Particular benefits accrue to students who have experienced problems themselves when they succeed in helping younger students.

Parent Volunteers Can't Assist in Classrooms Where Their Children Are Pupils

The factual proof for this statement is very rare; however, the concept is one accepted by many principals, teachers, and volunteers. There are many volunteers who simply aren't able to assist effectively in the same classes as their children because either their behaviour or their children's behaviour would be affected. However, when the teacher, parent volunteer, and child understand the ramifications involved in the commitment, the results are excellent, and in fact can provide an excellent learning situation for all involved. The decision should be left to the people directly involved, and a blanket decision affecting all situations should be avoided. In some programs, especially kindergarten and primary areas, the use of parent volunteers in classrooms with their own children is the rule rather than the exception.

SELECTED RESOURCES

These titles may prove useful to the teacher-librarian seeking additional materials; all are available from the Teachers' Professional Library (874-2617). Several other book titles and journal articles are also available on request.

Carter, Barbara, and Gloria Dapper. Organizing School Volunteer Programs. New York: Citation Press, 1974.

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Pell, Arthur R. Recruiting, Training and Motivating Volunteer Workers. New York: Pilot Books, 1972.

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Wilson, Marlene. The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs. 2nd edition. Boulder, Colorado: Volunteer Management Associates, 1976.